

— FACT SHEET —

Jessica Looman: Minnesota’s Commerce Commissioner

Governor Mark Dayton has appointed Jessica Looman to serve as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Commissioner Looman brings to the Commerce Department extensive experience in industry regulation, consumer protection, and effective public-sector management. Below is a summary of Ms. Looman’s work at the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) since 2011.

* * * * *

Promoting a Fair Marketplace and a Growing State Economy	
Ensuring Strong Labor Standards for Minnesota Workers and Businesses	<p>At DLI, Jessica Looman oversaw the Department’s Labor Standards Division. The Division ensures good, safe working conditions for Minnesota’s 2.9 million workers, and regulates 161,000 employers to ensure compliance with state wage and hour laws. Since 2011, 469,000 workers were served by the Labor Standards Program, and almost \$8 million has been assessed in back wages and penalties for failure to comply with Minnesota wage and hour laws. She has worked with worker and business stakeholders to help address wage theft and ensure that youth have safe and meaningful work opportunities.</p>
Connecting Minnesota Workers with Apprenticeships	<p>Throughout her career – both at DLI and with the Laborers District Council of Minnesota and North Dakota – Jessica Looman has been committed to strong apprenticeship programs that train workers for well-paying, fulfilling careers.</p> <p>At DLI, Jessica oversaw the Minnesota PIPELINE Program – an innovative approach to address the state’s current and future workforce needs that develops industry-based, employer-driven, dual training programs for workers across the state. In 2016, the Program earned a State Government Innovation Award for engaging over 700 industry leaders to invest in apprenticeships as a workforce investment strategy.</p> <p>During her time at DLI, Jessica also led the Registered Apprenticeship Division through an unprecedented expansion of new apprenticeship opportunities. Under her leadership, the program increased female and minority participation from 12 percent to 20 percent.</p>
Licensing and Registering Professional Contractors	<p>At DLI, Jessica Looman worked with stakeholders to amend state law and establish a two-year pilot project to register contractors who provide building construction and improvement services. The program became permanent in 2014. Since the program’s implementation, an additional 17,000 residential construction service providers have been registered with the State of Minnesota. Through licensing and registration of professional construction contractors, DLI promotes a fair, competitive marketplace, and giving consumers the assurances they need to know their contractors are properly trained and registered.</p>

Protecting Minnesota Consumers	
Protecting Homeowners from Fraud and Deceptive Practices	<p>At DLI, Jessica Looman ensured that the Contractor Recovery Fund, which serves as the consumer protection program for residential construction contractors, was fully funded and that the application process was streamlined for homeowners who have suffered a financial loss due to a licensed contractor’s fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest practices. Under her leadership, the Fund increased the amount of compensation available to homeowners to help them recoup their losses when their contractor fails to perform the services they paid for.</p>
Providing Better Services for Regulated Industries	
Less Costly, More Efficient Licensing – Saving Businesses Time and Money	<p>Professional licensing helps ensure a fair and competitive marketplace, while assuring consumers know the professionals they hire are properly trained. At DLI, Jessica Looman oversaw the licensing of 125,000 licenses for individuals and contractors performing construction services throughout the state. With Looman’s leadership, the Department put the licensing process online for all 43 licenses provided by the Department – making it faster, easier, and less costly for every professional and contractor licensed by the Department. These new online innovations reduced the time it takes to issue licenses by 65 percent.</p> <p>In addition to these reforms, Jessica Looman helped implement an online system for business license renewals, and simplified insurance filings. Because these online processes were more efficient, DLI was able to reduce its license fees by \$20 in 2015 – resulting in lower license costs for contractors, electricians, boiler operators, plumbers, and high-pressure pipefitters.</p> <p>In 2017, because of efficiencies shepherded by Looman, DLI was able to propose to the Legislature reducing the Department’s fees for construction licensing, permitting, and plan review. The proposal was passed by the Legislature, and will save Minnesota businesses an estimated \$5.2 million.</p>
Moving Permitting Online – Saving Time and Making Business Easier	<p>Since 2011, DLI has allowed electrical contractors, homeowners, and high-pressure piping contractors to apply online for permits, review inspection results, and pay fees – all in a matter of minutes. With Looman’s leadership, this new online system cut the amount of staff time required to process and issue permits by 90 percent. DLI processes about 105,000 electrical permits every year – 86 percent are now filed and issued online. In 2015, DLI added online E-TRAKiT permits for elevators and boilers. Now, 91 percent of these elevator and boiler permits are applied for and issued online – saving time, and making business easier.</p>
Making It Easier for Minnesotans to Comply with State	<p>In 2012, DLI built a one-stop “Local Code Lookup.” This new online tool, which Jessica Looman helped implement, allows homeowners and contractors to find local code requirements and code inspectors, all in one</p>

and Local Building Codes	place online. The search tool helps Minnesotans learn which code authority has local jurisdiction for permits, plan reviews and inspections in the areas of boilers, building codes, electrical, elevators, high-pressure piping, plumbing, or other Minnesota construction codes and licensing disciplines.
---------------------------------	--

Advancing Minnesota’s Clean Energy Economy

Reducing Costs for Solar Power Installations	Jessica Looman helped lead efforts to reduce the cost of installing solar panels in Minnesota. DLI implemented a new solar photovoltaic inspection fee schedule and reduced permit fees by up to 75 percent, should reduce the cost of solar installations an estimated \$800,000 in one year alone.
---	--

Reducing Costs for Wind Energy	Jessica Looman helped lead an effort to reduce the cost of wind generation in Minnesota. In 2013, DLI reduced electrical permit fee schedules for wind generation to reduce costs, and provide a flat fee based on system wattage. This innovative reform reduced fees for wind energy generation by 76 percent.
---------------------------------------	--

Collaborating on Energy Conservation	The best form of clean energy is the energy you do not have to use. That is why, at the request of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, Jessica Looman convened stakeholders from the Minnesota Department of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce, residential construction, building owners, and commercial real estate industries to find new strategies to expand energy conservation initiatives in the Minnesota State Building Code. These efforts are ongoing.
---	---

Delivering Better State Government Services

Communicating with Minnesotans in Plain Language	In 2013, Governor Dayton signed an Executive Order directing all state government agencies to begin training state employees how to communicate with Minnesotans in Plain Language – eliminating confusing government jargon, and ensuring state government services were accessible and easier to understand. Under Jessica Looman’s leadership, DLI’s Plain Language team completed 46 projects to simplify forms, procedures, and online information to make it easier for Minnesotans to read and understand.
---	---

More Efficient State Government Services	When Governor Dayton took office in 2011, the Administration undertook an effort to continually improve services across state government – delivering better, faster services for Minnesota residents and businesses. Under Jessica Looman’s leadership, DLI conducted 26 Continuous Improvement events to improve the speed and efficiency of its services, and eliminate unnecessary and wasteful tasks.
---	--